
JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Wednesday, November 9, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK and TBS gave top play to reports on the U.S. presidential election, saying that the ballot counting will begin soon. NTV, Fuji TV, TV Asahi, and most national dailies led with reports on the confusion caused by a gigantic sinkhole that opened up on a major street near JR Hakata Station in Fukuoka.



SCIENCE

Japan ratifies Paris Agreement

All papers ran front- or inside-page reports on Japan's ratification on Tuesday of the Paris Agreement on climate change following the unanimous approval of the accord by the Lower House on the same day. Prime Minister Abe issued a statement saying Japan will play a leading role in the global community's efforts to deal with climate change. However, since the agreement went into force on Nov. 4, Japan will only be able to participate in rulemaking discussions as an observer for the time being because of its delayed ratification.

INTERNATIONAL

Abe, Putin to hold talks in Tokyo after visiting Yamaguchi

Tuesday evening's Asahi wrote that arrangements are being made between the Japanese and Russian governments for President Putin to hold talks with Prime Minister Abe in Tokyo on Dec. 16 following their meeting in Yamaguchi on Dec. 15. The idea of meeting in Tokyo is being discussed at the request of Moscow, which attaches importance to economic cooperation with Japan. In Tokyo, Putin will meet with Foreign Minister Kishida and other cabinet ministers and attend a bilateral economic forum hosted by Keidanren. According to a GOJ source, Abe was originally hesitant about the idea of holding talks with Putin in Tokyo out of concern that it would be difficult to obtain understanding from the U.S., but the premier eventually agreed to accept the request in order to seek progress on the Northern Territories issue.

Abe to step up Shinkansen sales pitch to India

Tuesday evening's Yomiuri wrote that Prime Minister Abe has decided to visit Kawasaki Heavy Industries' Shinkansen bullet train assembly plant in Kobe with Indian Prime Minister Modi on Nov. 12 during Modi's visit to Japan starting on Nov. 10. The paper speculated that the visit is intended to promote Japan's high-speed rail system in India, which has agreed to use the Shinkansen system for a Mumbai-Ahmadabad route.

Wednesday morning's Asahi added that Japan and India are likely to agree on a five-year schedule starting in 2018 for the construction of the Mumbai-Ahmadabad route during their summit meeting on Nov. 11. Japan plans to help train some 4,000 engineers in India for the construction and operation of the Shinkansen system.

Japan, ROK to discuss GSOMIA

Sankei wrote that MOFA announced on Tuesday that defense and foreign affairs officials from Japan and South Korea will hold a meeting on Wednesday in Seoul to discuss a bilateral general security of military information agreement (GSOMIA). The agreement will allow the two nations to directly exchange defense information and enhance their capability to deal with the nuclear and missile threats posed by North Korea.

Kazakh President urges world leaders to visit Hiroshima, Nagasaki

Mainichi reported on an address delivered by Kazakh President Nazarbayev at the Diet on Tuesday, during which he urged world leaders to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Referring to his plan to visit Hiroshima on Wednesday, Nazarbayev said he will offer prayers to the victims of the atomic bombing. The Soviet Union carried out 456 nuclear tests in Kazakhstan, exposing more than one million people to radiation.

POLITICS

Ruling coalition seeks Lower House vote on TPP bills on Nov. 10

Several papers wrote that LDP and Komeito members of the Diet affairs committees confirmed their plan to put the TPP ratification and related bills to a vote in a Lower House plenary session on Nov. 10. However, the Democratic Party, the Japanese Communist Party, the Liberal Party, and the Social Democratic Party are considering submitting a no-confidence motion against Agriculture Minister Yamamoto.

Okinawa minister says he can't tell whether police's "dojin" comment was discriminatory

Most papers wrote that concerning a riot policeman's comment calling protesters in Okinawa "dojin" last month, Minister for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs Tsuruho said on Tuesday that it is impossible to determine whether it was discriminatory. Tsuruho made the remark in response to a question from a Japanese Communist Party lawmaker at an Upper House committee session.

SECURITY

GOJ, Okinawa to resume talks on base issues

Mainichi wrote that Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Sugita and Okinawa Vice Governor Ageda agreed on Tuesday that the GOJ and the Okinawa Prefectural Government will hold a meeting to discuss Futenma relocation and other issues this month. Okinawa hopes to discuss the partial return of the Northern Training Area during the meeting. This will be the first time for the GOJ and Okinawa to discuss Futenma relocation since Aug. 31.

Senior U.S. official explains U.S. policy on nuclear disarmament

Tuesday evening's Nikkei ran a Kyodo report saying that Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation Countryman said on Monday that the United States opposed a resolution on discussions on a nuclear ban treaty at the UN First Committee last month because it does not believe the motion is a realistic way to move forward with nuclear disarmament. A/S Countryman stressed that there has been no change in the Obama administration's policy of seeking a world without nuclear weapons.

Nuclear disaster drill held in Yokosuka

Tuesday evening's Tokyo Shimbun reported that some 300 residents, including primary school students, took part in a drill organized by the Yokosuka municipal government on Tuesday morning to prepare for the possibility of a nuclear accident aboard a U.S. Navy nuclear-powered vessel at the naval base in Yokosuka. Participants who live within 3-km radius of the installation were asked to take precautionary steps, such as taking shelter at a designated evacuation facility.

ECONOMY

Abe instructs Finance Ministry to closely watch currency markets after U.S. election

Nikkei and Mainichi wrote that Prime Minister Abe instructed Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs Asakawa on Tuesday to closely monitor moves in foreign exchange markets following the U.S. presidential election. The papers speculated that Abe gave the instructions out of concern that investors' moves could cause the yen to surge.

